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Unbiased reviews from the tech community

SERVER VIRTUALIZATION SOFTWARE

A PEEK INTO WHAT REAL USERS REALLY THINK

2014

IT Central Station helps IT professionals by providing

A comprehensive list of all enterprise level server virtualization software solutions.

Several real user reviews from IT professionals and vendor information.

Specific information to help IT professionals select the product that is right for their specific needs.

DISCLAIMER

To read more real user reviews about Server Virtualization Software, please visit:
http://www.itcentralstation.com/category/server-virtualization-software

ABOUT IT CENTRAL STATION

User reviews, candid discussions, and more for enterprise technology professionals.

The Internet has completely changed the way we make buying decisions. We now use ratings and review sites to see what other real users think before we buy electronics, book a hotel, visit a doctor or choose a restaurant. But in the world of enterprise technology, most of the information online and in your inbox comes from vendors but what you really want is objective information from other users. **We created IT Central Station to provide technology professionals like you with a community platform to share information about enterprise software, applications, hardware and services.**

We commit to offering user-contributed information that is valuable, objective and relevant. We protect your privacy by providing an environment where you can post anonymously and freely express your views. As a result, the community becomes a valuable resource, ensuring you get access to the right information and connect to the right people, whenever you need it.

Use IT Central Station to:

- Read and post reviews of vendors and products
- Request or share information about functionality, quality, and pricing
- Contact real users with relevant product experience
- Get immediate answers to questions
- Validate vendor claims
- Exchange tips for getting the best deals with vendors

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report is comprised of a comprehensive list of all enterprise level server virtualization software solutions. We have also included several real user reviews posted on ITCentralStation.com. The reviewers of these products have been validated as real users based on their LinkedIn profiles to ensure that they provide reliable opinions and not those of product vendors.

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If you found this report and/or the reviews on IT Central Station useful, we would greatly appreciate your participation in giving back to our community.

VENDOR & PRODUCT LIST

VENDOR	PRODUCT
Proxmox	Proxmox VE
VMware	VMware Workstation
VMware	ESXi
VMware	vSphere
Microsoft	Hyper-V
Oracle	Oracle VM Virtualbox
VMware	VMware Server
Citrix	XenServer
Oracle	Oracle VM
Red Hat	Red Hat Enterprise Virtualization
IBM	PowerVM
KVM	KVM
OpenVZ	OpenVZ
Parallels	Virtuozzo Containers

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Hyper-V

Vendor: Microsoft www.microsoft.com

REVIEW BY A REAL USER

RonSNunes Verified by IT Central Station
Infrastructure Expert, Tech Services Company with
1-500 Employees

PROS

- Hyper-V definitely has its pro's, some of which are painfully apparent.

- The first one is that it is a Microsoft product, which is baked into its Server 2008 and 2008 R2 platforms. You also have the option of a Hyper-V server core, which is only the Hypervisor (this allows for more resources to be dedicated to the individual VM's).

- It has Powershell scripting support built in and also excellent Virtual Networking technology.

- The VM's are portable. That means that each VM is stored in a single VHD file, which can be transferred to another server and configured and ready to run in less than a minute.

- It fully integrates into the Windows environment, allowing access via MMC consoles to change settings and create/administer virtual machines remotely.

CONS

- The only cons I can really think of are as follows:

- Individual licensing costs for each server.

- If you aren't using Hyper-V Core and are running Hyper-V on top of the full Server 2008 R2 platform, then you have less resources to allocate to your Virtual Machines.

- Except through RDP, there is no way to access the VM's on alternative platforms (like Mac or Linux).

OTHER

- I use Hyper-V almost exclusively for all my virtualization needs. From a Network Administrators viewpoint, specifically one catering to a Windows client base, there is no better choice than Hyper-V. Like I said before,

WHAT REAL USERS ARE SAYING…

"Microsoft has a winner with Hyper-V!"

"Hyper-V is a solution for virtual machines with better scalability, better dynamic memory management, and excellent virtual storage management."

"An easy and scalable solution for your enterprise virtualization needs."

"Reduce the DataCenter overhead cost with Hyper-V."

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it fully integrates into the Windows environment, allowing access via MMC consoles to change settings and create/administer virtual machines remotely.

- All in all, Microsoft Hyper-V is an excellent platform and a great competitor for VMWare.

REVIEW BY A REAL USER

jerifortune Verified by IT Central Station
Data Center Mgr, Financial Services Firm with 1-500 Employees

PROS

- The ROI on Hyper-V is enormous. It is cheaper than any other enterprises visualization tool.

- Hyper-V Replica can replace SAN, especially where SAN might be overloaded.

- It is dynamic and scalable.

CONS

- It lacks a built-in cloning function, you have to use the traditional export/import.

OTHER

- Visualization technology brought succor to IT enterprises users. The cost of acquiring multiple servers and its general maintenance has been drastically reduced. One physical or hardware machine can host multiple visual servers

- Windows Server Hyper-V is one of the best visualization servers in the market today. The new Hyper-V's dynamic memory feature is a big plus. It can automatically expand the memory allocation to accommodate more workload from different virtual machines. Other attractive features, that the new Hyper-V includes are, Live storage migration, utilization of up to 4TB memory per host RAM, Virtual Machine converter, replica services, RemoteFX, etc.

- I added the Hyper-V role in Windows Server 2008 R2 without any issue. Installation of the guest server was also smooth. Guest VM backup in Hyper-V is quite simple with great features such as, multiple destinations selection and Backup drive mirroring.

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VMware ESXi

Vendor: VMware www.vmware.com

REVIEW BY A REAL USER

lasso Verified by IT Central Station
IT Admin, Construction Company with 1-500
Employees

PROS

- Most usable hypervisor in the industry. It's well documented, really simple and quick to setup.

CONS

- You can not manage it from Linux.

REVIEW BY A REAL USER

Sys_admin Verified by IT Central Station
Data Center Expert, Financial Services Firm with
500-5000 Employees

PROS

- 1) Easier way of segmenting the resources.

- 2) Host profiles - Template to build hosts in minutes.

- 3) Performance and Graphs - Easy to monitor the hosts

- 4) Vmotion - In essence, this technique helps you to move a live server between hosts without any downtime.

- 5) Robust Management Tools

- 6) Cost saving

- 7) Advanced memory management - The memory unused in the hosts can be reclaimed and used effectively.

- 8) High availability

CONS

- The major disadvantage that i can think off is that we have to pay for all the features to be available.

OTHER

- Virtualization has made datacentre operations

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easier. As a sysadmin, managing multiple hosts is more simpler and flexible with the vmware ESXi. Running multiple hosts, operating systems on a single host makes it more efficient and saves costs. ESXi also allows you to pool the resources of several machines effectively, thereby helping to run the application smoothly without hassles.

- This gives the technology lovers an opportunity to do all the things they want or need to do at the same time.

REVIEW BY A REAL USER

RonSNunes Verified by IT Central Station
Infrastructure Expert, Tech Services Company with 1-500 Employees

PROS

- ESXi has one major benefit that outweighs the others; IT'S FREE!

- Yes, it has plenty of other benefits, like running a wide variety of different virtual operating systems in virtual machines (it supports every platform but OS X, and that can technically still be "hacked" onto it).

- It's incredibly robust, has excellent resource management, and is easy to set up. It allows for importing of virtual appliances, or pre-made VM's, or a creation of your own VM's.

CONS

- The only issue I have with ESXi is that it is console (CLI) based. While I personally have no operational issue with this, as most of my training began with CLI based systems, some people might not want to configure a high availability virtual machine server via the Command Line.

OTHER

- They're now marketing ESXi as VMware vSphere Hypervisor, which makes sense because that's essentially what it is. There used to be another product called ESX, which was a step between ESXi and vSphere, but they did away with that and rolled some of the features into ESXi.

- All in all, it is an excellent solution that I have deployed in multiple locations and organizations.

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Oracle VM

Vendor: Oracle www.oracle.com

REVIEW BY A REAL USER

anon359 Verified by IT Central Station
Developer, Tech Consulting Firm with 1-500
Employees

PROS

- 1) It allows deploying operating systems and the application software's within supported platforms and environments.

- 2) It includes VM Server which is designed to provide a secure, lightweight, server based platform to run and execute virtual machines. And also includes VM Manager which manages VM Servers.

- 3) The product is freely available under the terms of the GNU General Public License (GPL).

CONS

- 1) Drag and Drop feature is not stable, at times the UI becomes inconsistent, when using this feature.

- 2) Connecting VM Manager in a web browser twice in a different tab or window provides unexpected display issues.

- 3) When upgrading the VM server to newer version from ISO image and CD, though new entries are created in Oracle Linux grub menu, however entries from previous installation are not removed.

OTHER

- All and all the product offers number of benefits to the users who often use multiple platforms. Though there are some disadvantages of the product which can be fixed with some workarounds.

- Though the latest release 3.1.1 is quite mature and has more to offer in terms of performance, usability, security, and scalability.

REVIEW BY A REAL USER

teenajain Verified by IT Central Station

WHAT REAL USERS ARE SAYING…

"Oracle VM is an extremely feature rich, high performance product, which provides an environment to leverage the benefits of virtualization technology."

"Awesome Virtualization Software developed by Sun Microsystems."

"Oracle VM is a solution for virtual servers and machines. This software is freely available in the market."

"Oracle VM provides benefits beyond simple server consolidation, directly addressing IT's compelling need to reduce operational expense in the datacenter."

"Free, Amazing and Powerful, Cross-platform Virtualization Software."

"Oracle VM Server for x86 is an enterprise-proven, server virtualization solution for both Oracle and non-Oracle workloads, that makes enterprise applications easier to deploy, manage, and support."

"Free and competitive Desktop Visualization tool."

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IT Director, Tech Company with 1-500 Employees

PROS

- Enhanced storage configuration capabilities for better availability, backup and administration support.

- Fully integrated enterprise management from disk to applications to cloud.

- All Oracle applications fully certified on Oracle VM.

- Zero licensing cost, affordable enterprise

CONS

- Oracle VM suffers from all the disadvantages of the Xen hypervisor's OS-centric architecture, such as vulnerabilities from using a general-purpose management operating system, poor scalability, and incomplete or missing enterprise functionality.

OTHER

- Oracle VM Server for x86 can provision a working environment or application within a short time, enabling faster time to market. Oracle VM can easily manage the complete lifecycle of VMs including creation, customization, sharing, management, and deployment, in a hosted infrastructure. I want to highlight one of the goodies which you can use if you are running Oracle VM for X86: Preconfigured, downloadable Virtual Machine Templates form e-delivery. With these templates, you can download completely preconfigured Virtual Machines in your environment, boot them up, configure them at first time boot, and use it. There are templates for almost all Oracle SW and Applications (like Fusion Middleware, Database, Siebel, etc.) available. Oracle can provide you with a complete virtualization stack in terms of a hypervisor on both architectures: X86 and Sparc CPUs.

- All in all, it is an excellent solution that I have deployed in multiple locations and organizations.

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XenServer

Vendor: Citrix www.citrix.com

CITRIX

PROS

- XenServer is my favorite virtualization product.
  After previewing Vmware, Xen, and Hyper-V, I
  found this to be the easiest. You don't have to
  know linux to use. I like that XenServer can
  import virtual machines from any of the other
  hypervisors. I use scheduled snapshots and
  archiving, to where I don't have to worry if my
  machines are backed up. XenMotion is a
  breeze and makes it extremely easy to
  upgrade or change out servers. I also like that
  you can have heterogeneous pools with
  XenServer Advanced or above.

CONS

- You have to set limits on scheduled snapshots,
  otherwise it won't let you take more. I have a
  limit of 7 days, with daily snapshots. The free
  version is somewhat limited in features. It is
  best for testing or small organizations.
  Something that might be a con is that when all
  of your servers are virtualized, you may not
  need some of your IT staff.

OTHER

- I use this to host all of my servers and my
  virtual desktops. This has saved my
  organization a ton of money. Although there is
  a high initial cost, it has paid for itself in the
  long run. If you are planning on doing a VDI
  solution, I would recommend using the same
  company for virtualization. For XenDesktop,
  use XenServer; for Vmware VDI, use ESXI. To
  test the full features of XenServer, try out the
  open source equivalent- Xen Cloud Platform.

WHAT REAL USERS ARE SAYING...

"Highly recommended
virtualization software to manage
virtual guests."

"Full virtualization solution that
you can start with almost zero
cost."

"XenServer revolutionized my
enterprise to where there is no
downtime. Sometimes specific
configurations can be difficult."

"Highly recommended for
virtualization, as it deals
effectively with data backup,
data recovery, and data
storage."

"Free, Amazing and Powerful,
Cross-platform Virtualization
Software."

"Xenserver - Opensource
virtualization platform, definitely
worth testing and exploring!"

"XenServer Free Virtualization
Platform is one of the most full-
featured free hypervisors
available."

PROS

- The free software includes the advanced features, like migration of virtual machines from one host to another without interrupting the services, and active directory integration.

- Xen hypervisor is open source.

- Xen hypervisor is installed on bare metal and provides high performance.

- Real time performance monitoring

- Hot swappable disks and NICs

- Unlimited Virtual machines, Memory

- Management Console

- Virtual Machine template

CONS

- Xenservers need a 64 bit system with IntelVT or AMD V technology for windows guests.

- Management console only supports Windows

- Windows guests are well supported, but Linux guests have limited support.

- Its list of supported Linux guests is quite small.

OTHER

- Xenserver provides numerous features like, Xenmotion - live migration of virtual machines, real time performance monitoring, high performance using bare metal installation, and it's all absolutely free. It provides unlimited virtualization . Xenserver has a unique workload balancing technique which captures CPU, memory, network, and disk data. It may lack certain features, but it can satisfy many environments. In my opinion, Xenserver provides better features for free, making it the best for home, lab, and research purposes.

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VMware Server

Vendor: VMware www.vmware.com

REVIEW BY A REAL USER

sumodirjo Verified by IT Central Station
Infrastructure Expert, Intergrator with 1-500
Employees

PROS

- Unlike VMware workstation where we have to
  log in to desktop to run VM(s), with VMware
  Server we can run VM on the background. It
  also have a web based management interface
  so you don't have to install a software on your
  desktop to manage VMware server. It's still
  quite useful virtualization software that you can
  use for free if you want to spend extra mile
  patching some files before you can compile
  support for your kernel.

CONS

- VMware server already reaches its end of
  support on June 30, 2011. Since it's not
  supported anymore, and new support for
  newer OS, if you use a new Linux distro, you
  have to patch some files before you can
  compile support for you running
  kernel.VMware itself suggest its users to move
  to VMware Player if you only need to run small
  number of VMs on your desktop, or VMware
  vSphere Hypervisor if you want to run on
  dedicated machine.

OTHER

- Not the best choice if you want to start
  learning virtualization. You better choose
  VMware Player, or VirtualBox if you want to run
  virtualization software on your desktop or
  VMware vSphere Hypervisor and XenServer
  Free edition if you want a free virtualization
  software on a dedicated machine.

REVIEW BY A REAL USER

Srmgdatactr355 Verified by IT Central Station
Data Center Sr Mgr, Integrator with 1-500
Employees

PROS

WHAT REAL USERS ARE SAYING...

"VMware Server: Still one of the best virtualization tool."

"Old, almost dead but still a great software to play with but not for your production environment."

"VMware contributes a lot to virtualization with its better security and load management techniques."

"Excellent tool for its time, but there are better solutions now."

"VMware Server is the best available virtualization solution with live migration, high availability, and dynamic resources."

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- Pros on the VMware Server are-

- 1) Centralized management and configuration

- 2) Remote management and headless operation available

- 3) VMotion feature helps in real time movement of virtual machines from one server to the other

- 4) Automated scanning and patching of hosts

- 5) VSphere DRS for continuous monitoring resource pool utilization

- 6) Can be integrated with Windows Server Active Directory

- 7) Easy to use high availability and fail over clustering

CONS

- Few cons of VMware Server are

- 1) It is available for free so bug resolution and patch management takes time

- 2) Poor memory management

- 3) Requirement for supported SCSI and SATA controllers

OTHER

- One of the cutting edge virtualization technologies offered by VMware works on platforms like Windows, Linux, and Solaris. It facilitates an application developer to test applications on virtual machines with ease of configuration and management. It provides visibility at each and every level of virtual infrastructure.

REVIEW BY A REAL USER

Anon576 Verified by IT Central Station
CIO, Consultancy with 1-500 Employees

PROS

- Greatly consolidated my server infrastructure; DR/BCP friendly

CONS

- Hard to justify annual maintenance vs. HyperV

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Red Hat Enterprise Virtualization

Vendor: Red Hat www.redhat.com

REVIEW BY A REAL USER

anon376 Verified by IT Central Station
Infrastructure Expert, Federal Goverment with 500-5000 Employees

PROS

- RHEV costs are very low compared to other Virtualization products. RHEV hypervisor supports up to 160 cores and up to 2 TB of RAM on a host machine. Performance and security are key advantages of RHEV. One of the new features are transparent huge pages, where kernel dynamically creates large memory pages for virtual machines, which improves performance for most workloads by reducing the number of times that memory is accessed. It is open source, which means that it is available for use by every one. There is a "Power user portal" feature that helps developer and IT staff with a self-service interface that allows them to provision virtual machines, define templates, and be an administrator to their own environment.

CONS

- You need to buy support from red hat and you need to renew support every year in order to keep getting support from red hat. Some features are unavailable compared to leading visualization products. RHEV hyper-visor came later into the market than other leading visualization product.

OTHER

- RHEV hyper visor is a cost effective solution for virtualization. Its work on kernel base virtualization systems. Its usage keep growing in the market.

REVIEW BY A REAL USER

Srmgdatactr355 Verified by IT Central Station
Data Center Sr Mgr, Integrator with 1-500 Employees

PROS

WHAT REAL USERS ARE SAYING…

"RHEV Hypervisor is the best Virtualization product."

"One of the best open source virtualization techniques with enhanced security, performance, and cost advantage."

- Few pros of Red Hat Enterprise Virtualization Hypervisor are-

- 1) Kernel based virtual machine(KVM) virtualization technology

- 2) Good application compatibility and interface

- 3) Memory page sharing

- 4) NIC bonding

- 5) Multipath I/O

- 6) Efficient guest consolidation, live migration and HA

- 7) SELinux for enhanced security

CONS

- Few cons of Red Hat Enterprise Virtualization Hypervisor are

- 1) Need to create virtual machine environment per node

- 2) Issues with clustering

- 3) Load balancing not very efficient and fails to utilize and distribute network resources.

OTHER

- Red Hat Enterprise Virtualization Hypervisor is an enterprise virtualization solution made by Red Hat. It has been designed for intergration with Virtualization manager with servers. It has robust virtualization management features with proven enterprise security and performance. This Hypervisor is basically based on Kernel Based Virtual Machine. It has inbuilt features such as live migration, high availability (which manages server availability), and zero downtime for the virtual machines.

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